[Shri Shatrughan Prasad Singh]

Rs. four hundred crores. Import of fertilizers costs more and setting up new factories would cost twelve hundred crores of Rupees.

Therefore, the factories of our countries should be rejuvenated from every point of view.

(xii) Need to Formulate a Comprehensive Policy for Revival of Sick Public Undertakings

[English]

SHRI HARADHAN ROY (Asansol) : The present state of suspense for the sick public sector enterprises, if continued any longer, might end up doing irreparable damage to the enterprises.

The jurisdiction of BIFR to deal with the sick public sector enterprises appears to be a misconceived approach for solving the problems of the public enterprises. The delays involved in the disposal of cases by the BIFR are well known. Moreover, the decisions of the BIFR are not binding on either the Government or the enterprises or the workers or the financial institutions that have provided capital to the public enterprises. Any of the interested parties can go in for appeal in the Courts against the decisions of the BIFR, turning the entire process to an infructuous exercise.

The most urgent task for the Union Government, therefore, is to formulate a comprehensive and well-defined policy package for viability of the Central Sick Public Enterprises.

(xiii) Need to take steps to increase the production of Coal in South Karnapura area, Bihar

[Translation]

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR (Begusarai) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, the South Karnapura coal belt of Bihar has deposits of high grade coal. Despite this the production of coal has been declining every year. It is being said that coal production is becoming increasingly difficult due to non-availability of the technique of thick sim mining so far. The thick sim mining technique is available in other parts of the world.

18.18 hrs.

[SHRI P.C. CHACKO *in the chair*]

Therefore I request the Government to increase the production of coal in South Karnapura area of Bihar.

(xiv) Need for Early Completion of Certain Pending Railway Projects in West Bengal

[English]

PROF. JITENDRA NATH DAS (Jalpaiguri) : Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the long-standing demands of the people of the districts of Jalpaiguri and Coochbehar – (i) Gauge conversion of line from New Jalpaiguri – Siliguri Junction- Alipurduar Junction leading to Bongaigaon; (ii) survey for integrated Railway networks in the districts of Coochbehar leading to Dhubri, Assam have not been undertaken though these two schemes have already been included in the 1997-98 Budget. These demands have been raised from time to time and the Chief Minister of West Bengal has already drawn the attention of the Government to complete these two railway projects. The economic development of these areas depends largely on these projects and these two projects would be revenue earning routes of the Indian Railways.

I do urge upon the Government to take necessary steps so that the above-mentioned projects may be undertaken without any further delay as these two project are hanging for a quite long time.

(xv) Need to project the interests of betel leaf growers, particularly in Lalitpur district in U.P.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJENDRA AGNIHOTRI (Jhansi) : Mr. Chairman , Sir, cultivation of betel leaf is undertaken on a large scale in Bundelkhand division of Uttar Pradesh. The Farmers have to work hard and spend a lot on the cultivation of betel leaf. Sometimes the growers have to suffer heavy loss because of the damage caused by the insects and fire incidents. It is so serious that the farmers have to sell their property to make their both ends meet. The Government have not prepared any such scheme by which the betel leaf growers could get a place in world market and earn profit. The Government should implement compulsory crop insurance scheme for Betel Leaf and the State Government should bear the half of the insurance premium. The Union Government should take initiative for the implementation of such insurance scheme. In addition to it, the Government should make arrangement for pesticides and irrigation facilities to the farmers. If the Government does not pay timely need to it, the farmers would stop cultivation of betel leaf. In Pali area of Lalitpur